evergreen

The Journal: Petals In the ashes

Leaders: Marjon Musta and Aleandra Logu.

Section 1- Aleandra Logu:

Teacher Gladiola, Do You Miss the Old Me?

Teacher Gladiola,

Do you still remember me — the one who used to smile like the world couldn't touch her?The one who laughed at everything, even the little things?You said my joy was contagious, that my light filled the room.But now… I don't even know where that light went.Sometimes I wonder if you'd still recognize me now.I don't talk like I used to.I don't walk with that spark in my step anymore.The girl who used to believe everything would be okay —she's gone quiet.If you don't believe me, go ask my closest friends.Ask them what happened.Ask them why I changed.They'll probably say, "She's not the same anymore."They might tell you I stopped showing up, stopped laughing that I drifted away without saying why.And maybe they're right.Maybe I did. But Teacher, it's not that I wanted to change.It's that the world got too heavy,and my smile couldn't carry it anymore.I used to think being strong meant pretending nothing could hurt me.Now I know — pretending hurts the most.Do you miss the old version of me? Because I do.I miss waking up without dread.I miss singing to songs that used to make me feel alive.I miss being that "light" you once believed in.I try to find her sometimes.I scroll through old photos, old messages,looking for proof that I was ever really that happy.But it's like she faded out of the frame —and left me standing in her shadow.If you ever see her somewhere, Teacher Gladiola that girl with the easy smile and hopeful eyes tell her I'm still looking for her. Tell her I miss her.Tell her I'm sorry I let her slip away.And maybe… just maybe…tell her that you still believe she can come back.

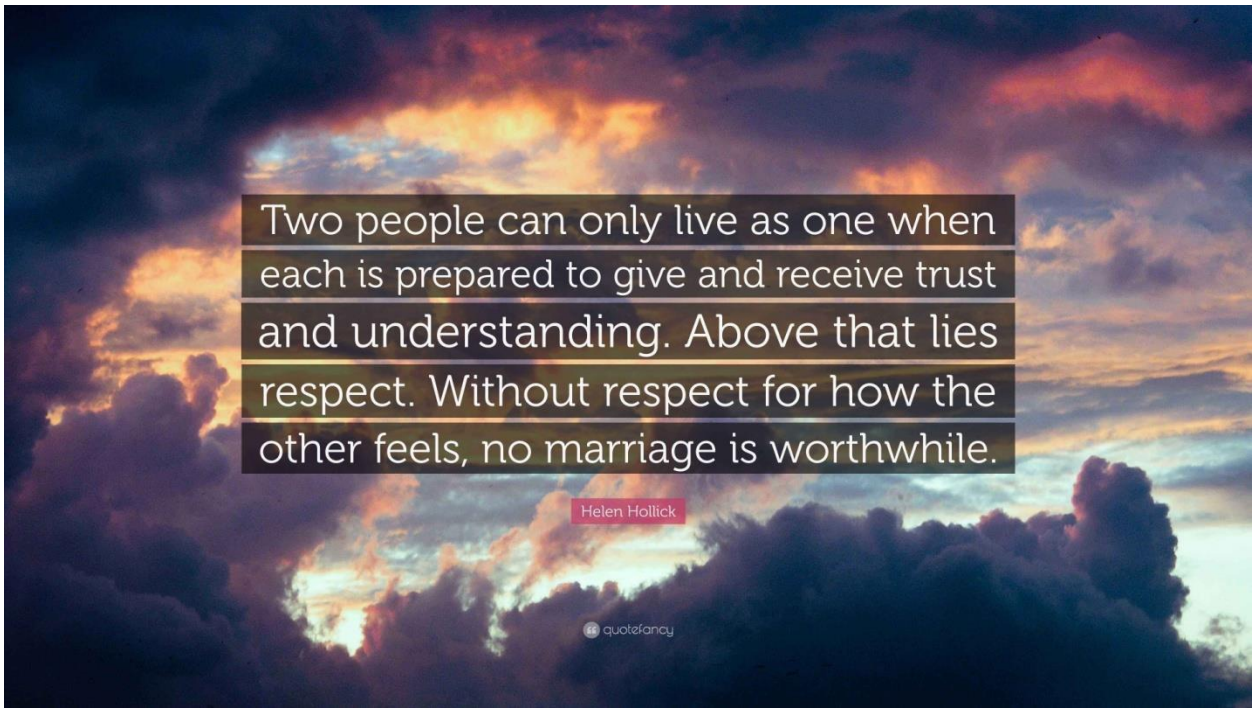
What Does Depression Really Mean?

What does depression really mean? It’s not just being sad — sadness fades, but depression lingers like a shadow that won’t lift. It’s waking up every morning with no reason to move, no spark left inside. It’s smiling so no one asks questions while inside you’re falling apart. It’s losing interest in everything you once loved, even in yourself. Depression is when laughter feels fake, when sunlight doesn’t feel warm anymore, and when every breath feels heavier than the last. It’s not about weakness; it’s about being trapped in a storm that no one else can see. The worst part is trying to explain it — because how do you describe a pain that doesn’t leave bruises? Depression means fighting a battle no one else notices, and still pretending you’re okay.

I Only Live for Two People

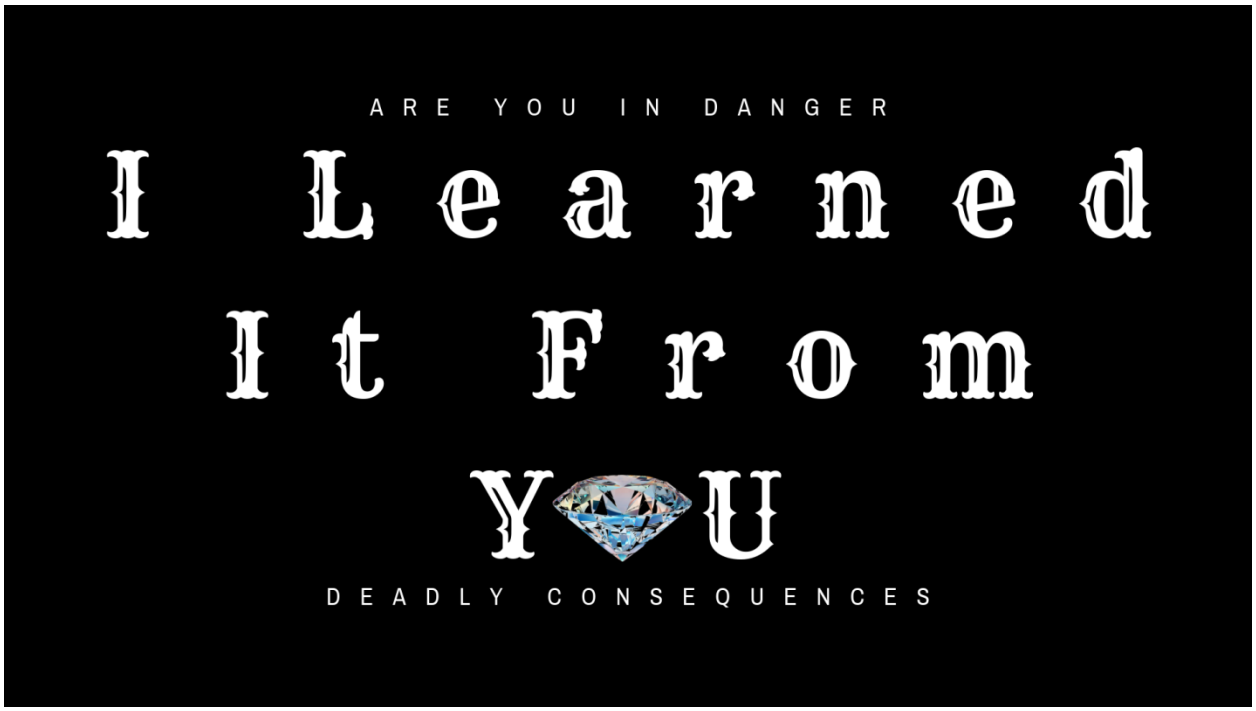
Sometimes I think about giving up.Not because I want to die, but because I can’t find a reason strong enough to keep going. The world feels cold. Friends fade. Promises break. Days blur together until everything feels the same — heavy, grey, and silent. But then I think of them — my parents.The only two people who would truly break if I left.They’re the reason I still breathe when I don’t want to.They’re the only thread that ties me to this world.When the pain gets too loud, I see their faces — tired, worried, full of love they don’t always know how to show — and I hold on.I don’t live for myself anymore.I live for them — for the people who raised me when I couldn’t stand, who stayed when everyone else drifted away.They don’t know how dark it gets inside my head, how close I’ve come to

falling apart. But somehow, their love keeps me here.Maybe that’s what survival looks like for me — not hope, not happiness, just love strong enough to keep me alive.Two people. That’s all.And for them, I’ll stay.



I Learned From You

I learned from you that real kindness is rare.That it doesn’t shout, it doesn’t ask for attention —it just gives, quietly, even when no one noticesI learned from you that not everyone deserves people like you.Because some people don’t know what to do with kindness.They fight it.They try to hurt it.Maybe because they’ve never felt it inside themselves.You showed me that being kind in a cruel worldisn’t weakness — it’s power.It’s standing tall without shouting.It’s staying soft when life tries to make you cold.I learned from you that sometimes the people with the gentlest heartscarry the heaviest pain —and they still choose to be good.You taught me that love doesn’t always mean big words —sometimes it’s just being there,understanding without asking,caring when everyone else looks away.I learned from you that kindness doesn’t always get returned —but it always matters.And if I can carry even a little of that light you have,then maybe I’ll be okay too.



Section 2- Marjon Musta:

How I Found Inner Peace

There was a time when I believed happiness rested in the hands of others. I exhausted myself trying to keep them content, measuring my worth through borrowed smiles. A light dwelled within me, soft yet radiant, and I allowed it to shine for everyone. But slowly, that light began to wane. Their words, sharp and careless, pierced my spirit. I tried to silence them, again and again, but their echo remained. The wound had been carved. Those I once lifted with kindness became the very ones who left me hollow. In giving away all my strength, I had forgotten to guard a part of it for myself.

What redeemed me was English. It offered more than rules of grammar or lists of vocabulary. It became a language of freedom, a vessel for my voice. Through it, I poured out the silence I had carried, shaping pain into words, grief into sentences. Each word learned felt like a spark rekindled. Each sentence built reminded me that my voice had weight. English was no longer a subject. It was a sanctuary, a realm where my spirit could breathe without fear.

I was blessed with an English teacher who guided me through this awakening. She believed in me when I could not. Her quiet faith reminded me that true strength is not defined by the clamor of applause, but by the stillness of self-belief. Her lessons reached far beyond language. They gave me resilience, dignity, and the courage to guard my smile. She taught me that I did not need to plead for a place in this world. My place had always been mine.

Now that I am grown, I see with clarity what I once could not. Not everyone is worthy of my light. My smile is not a gift to be squandered. My happiness is not for those who take without care. Inner peace did not descend in a single moment. It blossomed slowly, through words reclaimed, lessons cherished, and the realization that strength had always lived within me.

Today, I carry my light with reverence. It no longer quivers beneath harsh voices. It belongs to me, steadfast and clear. Till my final breath, I will not surrender it to the unworthy. I choose where it shines, and in that choice, I have found peace.

As Rumi wrote, “Do not get lost in your pain. Know that one day, your pain will become your cure.” And as Tagore said, “Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark.” For me, peace is not the absence of wounds. It is the sacred decision to honor myself, to guard my soul, and to let my light shine only where it is treasured.

Self respect,

Today I will talk about something that no one can take from you, something that builds the foundation of every choice you make, every step you take, and every relationship you have. That is self-respect. Self-respect is knowing your value so clearly that no insult, pressure, or fear can shake it. It is the quiet strength that makes you stand tall even when the world pushes you down. It is refusing to trade your integrity for approval, refusing to ignore your needs to satisfy others, and refusing to settle for anything

that diminishes you. Self-respect is powerful because it shapes how you live. It protects your mind, your body, your goals, and your spirit. It is the reason you walk away from harm, the reason you demand honesty in relationships, the reason you follow your own path instead of someone else's. You respect yourself by speaking your truth, keeping promises to yourself, setting clear boundaries, saying no without guilt, and surrounding yourself with people who lift you higher. Every choice, every action, every word builds it stronger or weakens it, and once it is strong, nothing can shake you.

Deppresion,

Depression is a profound disruption of the mind and spirit, a persistent shadow that infiltrates thought, emotion, and perception. It is more than sadness; it is a long-lasting contraction of energy and will, where even simple actions become overwhelming. The mind narrows, concentrating on despair and loss, while the world outside appears distant and muted. Time stretches, dragging moments into oppressive continuity, and the self feels fractured, as though layered beneath relentless heaviness. Memory loses its clarity, anticipation of pleasure fades, and motivation dissolves, leaving tasks, relationships, and ambitions suspended. Even when life presents opportunities or beauty, they are filtered through a haze of emptiness and fatigue, producing a sense of isolation that feels unbreachable. The body often mirrors the mind, with exhaustion, restlessness, and pain accompanying the inner turmoil. Depression distorts identity, making one question purpose and worth, while emotions oscillate between numbness and intense sorrow. It is a slow, invisible erosion, relentless and consuming, shaping perception and experience in ways that are difficult to articulate or alleviate. Every thought carries weight, every decision feels monumental, and every connection requires effort that may feel impossible. It is a condition that persists beyond moments, shaping days, weeks, and months, leaving traces that linger even in temporary reprieves.

Throughout the course of our lives, we inevitably have to deal with a variety of individuals who stir up trouble and make our lives difficult and unpleasant. Some of these individuals are leaders or bosses, some are colleagues, and some are friends. They can be aggressive or passive-aggressive, but they are generally masters at playing on our emotions. They often appear charming and refreshingly confident, brimming with ideas and enthusiasm, and we fall under their spell. Only when it is too late do we discover that their confidence is ir-rational and their ideas ill-conceived. Among colleagues, they can be those who sabotage our work or careers out of secret envy, excited to bring us down. Or they could be colleagues or hires who reveal, to our dismay, that they are completely out for themselves, using us as stepping-stones.What inevitably happens in these situations is that we are caught off guard, not expecting such behavior. Often these types will hit us with elaborate cover stories to justify their actions, or blame handy scapegoats. They know how to confuse us and draw us into a drama they control. We might protest or become angry, but in the end we feel rather helpless—the damage is done. Then an-other such type enters our life, and the same story repeats itself.

We often notice a similar sensation of confusion and helplessness when it comes to ourselves and ourown behavior. For instance, we suddenly say some-thing that offends our boss or colleague or friend—we are not quite sure where it came from, but we are frustrated to find that some anger and tension from within has leaked out in a way that we regret. Or perhaps we enthusiastically throw our weight into some project or scheme, only to realize it was quite fool-ish and a terrible waste of time. Or perhaps we fall in love with a person who is precisely the wrong type for us and we know it, but we cannot help ourselves. What has come over us, we wonder?In these situations, we catch ourselves falling into self-destructive patterns of behavior that we cannot seem to control. It is as if we harbor a stranger within us, a little demon who operates independently of our willpower and pushes us into doing the wrong things. And this stranger within us is rather weird, or at least weirder than how we imagine ourselves.What we can say about these two things—people's ugly actions and our own occasionally surprising behavior—is that we usually have no clue as to what causes them. We might

latch onto some simple explanations: “That per-son is evil, a sociopath” or “Something came over me; I wasn’t myself.” But such pat descriptions do not lead to any understanding or prevent the same pat-terns from recurring. The truth is that we humans live on the surface, reacting emotionally to what people say and do. We form opinions of others and our-selves that are rather simplified. We settle for the easiest and most convenient story to tell ourselves.

The End